

Nannie Bathsheba Smith

Nannie Bathsheba “Sheba” Smith, daughter of Jesse L. Smith and Nannie Cobb, was born October 21, 1864 in Beaver Dam Township, Pitt County, NC, died January 16, 1943, at Ballard’s Cross Roads, NC. She married John Hardy Flanagan in 1885. She and John had 5 sons and 7 daughters.

Known as Sheba, she grew up in the Beaver Dam/Bell Arthur community on a tobacco farm. After marriage, she lived with her family in Pitt County, NC near the Greene County line in the township of Farmville. She was a hard working woman, devoted to her children. She was adept at the type of housekeeping chores necessary at the time. Eventually, the family moved to Farmville, about 3 miles away. The move was made primarily for better schooling but probably social activities also.

Sheba’s husband, John, died in 1923 and she and her sons managed the family farm much of the work being done by her youngest son, Sam. Sheba had a sister who married her husband’s brother, Jay A. Flanagan and a brother, Ivy Smith who married her husband’s sister, Nancy Penelope Flanagan. Her home was not far through the countryside from the home of the Archibald H. Flanagans and surely there was a lot of visiting back and forth. Part of her husband’s farm was on the Old Plank Road and her sister Lizzie and Jay Flanagan lived on an adjacent farm partly on the same road. An interesting fact is that she was the 11th child of Jesse Smith who was married three times. She had 20 brothers and sisters.

Sheba’s passions were her family, her church and a duty to community members. She was active in the Farmville Christian Church. She tended along with her husband to dote on their children and grandchildren and treat them very kindly. A part of that was her interest in school as was her husband. Sheba was well read and “highly esteemed” in the community as her obituary mentioned.

John Flanagan, her husband had some health problems most of his life but was able to provide for the family in an admirable way. He was able to see that the children did not lack for their early education and that they had a happy home life. Sheba was a cheerful, energetic person who was what has always been known as a “pillar” of the community.

An interesting anecdote is that when she passed away, her son, Alfred was in the Army in Fort Benning, GA and had difficulty getting home for the funeral. He arrived just before the casket was to be lowered into the grave and the minister explaining the situation to the assembly asked that the casket be opened so Alfred could take one last look at his mother.